

T H E  
CONFLICT  
I N  
CONSCIENCE

OF A DEAR CHRISTIAN

Named,

BESSIE CLERKSON,

In the Parish of Lanerk, under which she  
lay three years and an half,

*With the Conference that past betwixt her  
Pastor and her, at diverse times.*

Newly corrected, and amended.



GLASGOW,

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and are to be sold in his shop 1685.





## TO THE CHRISTIAN READER

**T**His Conference ( Christian Reader ) came forth at the first by my knowledge. I found the words of this dear Defunct of greater worth then that they should fall to the ground , and not be gathered. So at last , as I visite , wrot ; but not to put out to the view of the world ; yet some have done it by an uncorrect Copy , wherein my words are made hers at sometimes , and hers mine Wherefore , at the desire of the Printer , and other good people , I have given a just Copy : entreating heartily the Almighty , that you who read it , may make profitable use of it , to his glory , and thine everlasting good.

Thine in the Lord,

Will. Levingston





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I answer her, No, Bettie, I must not measure you as you do your self, by your own sense; but to teach you to hope above hope, and say with Job, *Lord, if thou wilt slay me, I will trust in thee.*

B. O there was grace there; but there is a great dissention betwixt God and me: I am cast away. O that this waking had come twenty years since! But now my time is lost. Many comes to Word and Sacrament, that knows not what they are doing. The morn when Gods people come to hear you, I cannot come; I am cast aside.

M. It is yet the acceptable time, wherein the Lord may be found, he is yet upon the throne of grace: Give no place to such suggestions of satan & distrustful cogitations, arising of your corruptions; and where you cannot come to the Word, that is not to be laid to your charge. It is not an argument of Gods anger, when one by sickness or trouble is withholden, who would fain be there; but seek you by prayer to God, who by his Spirit will teach you inwardly and supply the want of the means by an inward working.

When I pressed to perswade her, that God in his own time would ease her, I cannot find that, said she.

M. Albeit ye feel it not, pray that the Lord would *remember mercy with truth*, as the Prophet *Hab. 2. 5.* Mercy in wrath, said she; O that is a strange word! O for absolution! O for a drop to cool my tormented soul! O that I could win a step nearer him!

M. *Blessed are they that hunger and thirst, for they shall be satisfied.* It is the Lord who is our sufficiency, who works the will and the deed; It is he who wakens those desires in you, and he will work the work.

When I had said the Lord dealt with her as he doth to humble her. To humble me, said she, and that I am; the cat that sits there, is in a better case then I am. I shall beat down this carcass with beer, bread and water; but that doth



not the turn. When her servant-woman said, You are a good body, and began to commend her. Cease, said she, I am but a dog, and worse then a dog; Gods wrath is on me, for my invincible sins; and if I were away, there would be none but Christians on the earth, I know Christ would go betwixt me and all my sins, but one; I will not lamen it, nor hide it; It is despair.

M. You are very sensible of your unbelief, and God will make you also sensible of a lively faith ere all be done, *for a little while hath he forsaken you, as he saith, Isa. 54. 7. 8. 9. 10. but with great compassion will he gather you. For a moment in his anger hath he hid his face from you, for a little season. but with everlasting mercy will he have compassion on you. And 10. 11. O thou afflicted and tossed with tempest!*

B. Is it God that doth this to me? Can God spoil himself? I had faith and prayer, now they are rent, cut and spoiled. Can God do it? Will God rob himself? Will he take away the matter of his own glory? I am ashamed to look any man in the face, I have lost the favor of God & man. O for a drop of grace! O for as much faith as a grain of mustard seed!

M. It is the Lord that deals with you, but not to rob your faith, which is his gift; and once given, cometh never under provocation; Yet it continueth not ay in a like vigor and strength, but will oft come under a great eclipse, & be branled with doubtings, & shaken with tears; for there is no perfection here; and all this exercise is to add strength, that the wrestling with God, as Jacob did, may prevail in end; and that is not lost, your earnest desire evidently declareth. And when I shew her that we walked by faith, & not by feeling, and must not measure our selves, nor Gods goodness and love by our sense. She answereth, If faith do it not, I have done with it. When one beside spake to her of Gods favor & presence, she said, God, if I were as sure of it, as you are, I have (said she) hands, feet, eyes, knees; I can do any thing

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but



but one, I cannot believe: Well were the soul that ever it was ordained that had faith, O the great want of faith and love to God in these days: It was never less, and they will find one day what it is to want it. One thing holds me from God, it is unbelief, Gods hand is fore on me; I would fain believe. Pray, pray, pray (said she) ye that have faith,

M. The Lord who will not break the bruited reed, nor quench the smoking flax, will bring your desire, and these weak beginnings to a greater growth & perfection; for faith groweth by degrees, as that blindmans sight, *Mark 8, 24. 25.*

When I told her of Gods dealing with his own, by divers sorts of trouble in mind, body at a state: she answereth. No trouble to the trouble in mind, I care not (said she) for legs, arms, eyes, & all the rest. if I could get comfort in the blood of Jesus. I would not care my carkals lay lame, leper, sick, sore, so that my mind were pacified, and at one with God. I care not for all satans assaults, if he were even standing there, so that I could find God with me, and not against me. Wait on (said I) the Lord will come. She answereth, He cometh dayly in wrath. But he will come in mercy (said I) in his own time. She answereth, Ever since this bred in me, you said that, but I can never find it: I would willingly lose my soul, if I could get faith. Well is the soul that ever it was ordained of God, that gets the comfort of the holy Ghost!

M. Would you not (Bessie) be one of his? Wally, wally, said she. to be one of his, to have ope drop of grace from his finger end. Who would not be one of his? Then said I. Blessed are ye: *For blessed are they that hunger & thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.* Blessed are they that seek in sincerity to be one of that society of the Saints of God: to have the comfort of that communion and priviledge of his people: *For blessed, Plal. 33. 12. are these people whose God is the Lord, even the people whom he hath chosen for his own inheritance.* And after I had prayed for her, and pressed by some passages of



of Scripture to comfort her, she said, It is heavy to my heart those admonitions and prayers, and to get no part of them in my soul, and not to find him whom you seek.

She saith again, Whether shal I turn? Whether shal I go? What shal I do? Whether shal I run to seek God to grip him? I cannot get grips fastned on him. Dear Minister (said she) tell me why sin hath procured this, that I am such a spectacle to the world by all others? Heard you, read you knew ye ever one like me? Then I shew her of Job, Jeremie, David, Hazekiah, and others. And albeit (Bessie) to your feeling, ye cannot get grips fastned on him, yet assuredly he hath grips fastned on you: The good Shepherd hath you in his hand, and none shal pluck you out of it.

B. I think if ever I had faith, I could not have lost it.

M. Your desire which God reputes for faith, hath the same promise of satisfaction which faith hath made unto it.

She answereth. I would be burnt quick to be sure of salvation. I live without faith: I live and worship not God. I can find no comfort from God nor man: my life is miserable and comfortless. That is even Jobs complaint, said I, *Job 3. 20, 21.* So albeit ye be comfortless to your sense, yet you are not marrowless, and hath the Saints subject to the same tentation and tribulation with you: and ye shal get in the Lords mercy, a blessed outgate with them; yea, although we be never witness to it, yet you your self shal feel it.

B. I am the most miserable and wretched creature in the world; for my sins are hid to my self, and known to God.

M. Bessie, God is not ay pursuing sin, when the souls of his Saints are perplexed and pursued with horrors: *He seeth no iniquity in Jacob, nor sin in Israel;* albeit it setteth us to seek them out, & to sorrow for them: he hath other ends wherefore he dealeth with his own, namely that he may show his work, and glorifie his Name, as Christ saith of the blind man, *John 9. 3.* After I had prayed, said she, If your prayers have



a good ground, and be according to Gods will, it is the better, it will be the better heard. But that it is, said I, I have a warrant to mourn; and to pitty and pray for all that are in trouble, chiefly of my own flock. Your warrant were the better, said she, if I were one of Christs flock; happy is that soul that is one of those. But ye are one of those, said I. Ye have ay said that, said she; but I can never find it. You will find it, said I, in the Lords time; tarry his leasure it will come with comfort. Tarry must I, said she, where shal I flee or sit? he cometh ay in due time; but he cometh to me in wrath. When I remembered her of Job, who said *I thou wilt slay me, yet I will trust in thee.* She answereth, Where will ye get the like of Job. No, not among you all that are Ministers. Faithful was he, but I have none: no salvation for me. Then to try her, I said, Will you sell me your dart of it, your right and kindness? What shal I give you for it? If you have none, you may the better cheap quite it, and I will give you. She answereth, Why scorn you me, a silly poor woman, and ye a wise man. I would buy and not sell. If I had ten thousand millions of gold, if I had a thousand worlds, if it were to be bought for money, I would give you all for it.

M I said not this to scorn you, Bessie, but to draw out your desire by this demand, as it doth; whereby it is easie to discern that ye have a litle tittle to that salvation, although it seem tint to your self.

B, I have no pleasure in any thing, neither in husband, nor child: I can do nothing but sin; my life is all sin; and it were to peal the bark off a cale castock and eat. I sin in the doing of it; why live I then, I cannot die, said she; I cannot live; they bury a carcass: Will they bury me, a carcass of sin, yea, sin it self.

When I asked at her, If she desired mercy? She answered, O that his desire to me were as great as mine to him! O for a look of love! Cry, and pray, said I, for the Lord hath said,  
*Seek,*



*Seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.* My prayer, said she, is repelled, my cry is not respected it doth no good, I cannot have faith, except God give it; none have any grace but from him; happy are they that can bless him, and call upon his Name.

M. And happy are they, Bessie, that counts them happy, & would with all their heart be of that number, as ye would.

B. That stone in the wall hath as great appetit to any bodily comfort of meat, drink, clothes or such like, as I have; I cannot get the comforts of the holy Spirit.

M. When I prayed for that consolation to her, that solid comfort which is stronger then tentation, tribulation, or death it self she said, Why ware ye your prayers on such a vile wretch; God hath counted the number, and gathered them, and I am one mo. I will not believe you, said I, Bessie, albeit ye believe the suggestions of satan in your false heart, it is otherwise in the account of God & I will pray for you, that it may be revealed to you, and pray you with me. And after I had prayed she said, Sayings will not do it, you do your part; but if God work not, and he give it not, I cannot have comfort. Can any have grace till God give it? Can that stone believe? Yet, Bessie, said I, let us use the means, and do according to Gods direction in his word, & wait on till he who hath wounded, heal again, and he will make light arise in the midst of your darkness the light of consolation in the darkness of perturbation, and calm the tempest that is in your conscience.

B. There is no friend to that soul that is under Gods feed; I am under Gods feed; and my husband, children, nor any other, are friends to me; nay, not my own self is a friend to my self; as for my corps, I care not it were cast up to the heaven, and kepped upon iron grags so my soul had peace.

M. Bessie, many have peace with themselves that have none with God, as secure sinners sleeping in sin, & crying peace; and



and some have peace with God that have none with themselves ; and as many have not the grace and faith, which they think they have , so some have the grace and faith , which they think they have not.

B. I care not for mine own damnation , if God be glorified : what reck of me if he gets his own glorie.

M. Bessie , Assure your self these are not the wishes and words of a cast-away, and Gods glory be dear to you , you and your salvation are dear to him.

When I asked if she took meat to refresh her body ? she answered, No, all craves that, both faithful and unfaithful, albeit the unfaithful be unworthie of it, for they cannot glorifie that God that gives it.

When I desired her to pray she answered, I have no warrant, and have many lets. Will you say, said I. God be merciful to me, for Jesus sake : she said, God be merciful to me, for thy own sake, for Christ hath not redeemed all Bessie, said I, ye must seek in the Name of Jesus , whom the Father hath sealed in whom alone he is reconciled with us, and for whose sake he giveth grace and mercie : lay your compt, you will never come to the Father, but by him.

M. B. Do ye not pray when ye are alone ? She answered, I will not commend my self. When one parting with her , said, God be with you, Bessie. She answered, God forbid he were with you , as he is with me. O there is a great change coming, a fearful alteration, a cup of wrath coming, we are conceived and born in sin, and what shal be the end of sin ?

M. Indeed, Bessie, sin hath fearful effects; but blessed be the Son of God Jesus, who saveth his people from their sin. *There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ.*

B. I know if the devil were chained there beside me, he cannot without Gods permission, hurt an hair of mine head, but God being angry with me, he turns him loose, and all his instruments against me.

M. Bessie



M. Bessie, the Lord loosed him upon Job, but so many links only, that he wan to his good children boy, but not his life, far less to his soul. The Lord will not give the soul of his turtle to the beast, the good shepherd hath you in his hand, and none shal pluck you out of it, what ever be your fear, doubtings, or apprehensions under your trial, and present desertion.

When some standing by spake to her, she sayes, Take all that to your self that you say to me, ye have no borrows, no assurance more nor I & knows not but ye come in the like case.

M. Indeed we should take our warning by you, and we have all mitter to gather & lay up against the hour of temptation. I coming to her saith. Bessie, Have ye gotten any comfort yet? She answered, When God sends it, I will get it.

But seek ye it not, said I? she answereth, What availeth words, when there is nothing within? When I was blessing the Lord, she doubled the word, and said. Blessed be he, blessed be he. O that I could glorifie, O that I could get grips fastned on him. I see, Bessie, said I, albeit you pray not, yet you praise and bless God. I cannot, said she, bless him, he is blessed in himself, and I never heard him blasphemed, but I was grieved at it. I had rather have heard the evil spirit named ten times then him once blasphemed. Fy on them that cannot bless, and yet will blaspheme him.

When I earnestly prayed for her, she said. Why take ye pains on such a vile wretched creature? I would Bessie, said I, have God gloryfying himself in a lost soul, and magnifying his mercy on you who is miserable. I, said she, that is right good, God grant it, God grant it. O there is little faith in the earth, and love is grown cold!

When I desired her to pray, and said, Long since, Bessie, ye would have prayed, why insist ye not? She answered, I had the will of prayer, but who hath the spirit of prayer, God knows, well is the soul that is in Christ: But they that are founded on that old father Adam, fearful is their estate.

When



When I was posing her with some questions about inward estate, she said, Why examine ye me so sore, ye use sharp examination, and yet ye will not be my Judge. Bessie said I, would know your constitution, that I may the better know how to deal with you : I am about to instruct and comfort you, to use the means, and beg a blessing from God upon them : and I have seen when ye were better content that I conferred with you, and prayed for you. She answered. It is a token that I get small comfort by them. The Lord, said I, Bessie hath that to give, he hath not credited the dispensation of a dram weight of grace to man or angel, he keepeth that in his own hand, & dispenses when, & to whom, and after what measure and manner he pleases. But I see the devil in your corruption, is not content the means be used. She answered, I find the devil, the world and the flesh fighting against me : I feel both satans assaults, and ly under Gods wrath also, which is a fearful case : what reck of all satans assaults, if I lay not under Gods wrath.

M. The greater battel, Bessie, the greater victorie : I see great conflict in you, and you your self finds it, as you confess : yet happy are ye who are pursued by satan, and not possessed by him, & under peace with him. The Lord hath divided betwixt you and him, and drawn you to that side whereon the seed of the woman is : I find faith fighting in you against unbelief, & where faith and unbelief are in one soul fighting, faith shal ever prevail. By faith is our victory, *1 Job. 5. 4.* And what is the condition of the Christian ever after his calling, but to feel his troublesome conflict between nature and grace spirit and flesh, the old man and the new. But blessed be God who shal tread satan under feet : so albeit this battle be burthensome, yet let this bear you up, that the Lord in end shal give you the victory over all your enemies. It were said she, a great comfort to me if I were perswaded of it : but I cannot be quite of infidelity and despair. Well



is the soul that ever it came into the world, that can be freed of unbelief, and grace to believe. Lord, banish the devil, & I shall believe. And some Gentlemen and others being with me she directs her speech to them, saying; Ye Gentlemen & simple, and all, let my casting back be your forward coming. Well are ye that can believe and pray; but I have none. I have no wit in the world, either to bless God, or to benefit my self. Many thousands get grace and faith, and I would as fain have it as any of them.

M. Bessie, God measureth his own by their unfained desire; and what you would be in an hearty affection, that ye are in the compt of God; & that secret seed of grace, which in this exercise under the ashes of your corruption lyeth hid, and dead as it were, like seed in the ground, or hot coals under ashes, shall hereafter in the mercy of God bud and break forth; for it may be discerned already in these divine desires in your estimation of the blessedness of those that believe, and affection to be one of that number. Bessie, is there any comfort come yet? She answereth, if it were come, it would kye, it would bud forth. O! & many a time have you said comfort was a coming, but I cannot find it. Alace! I am an out-law to God; I weep in the night when I should sleep; I mourn when others are merry, I am bound when they are free; I have a longsome lair, a fearful & sore lair here, when others go up and down, to and fro; I am a wonder to the world, and I am worthy to be so.

M. Bessie, long delay is not an argument of utter denial; and where ye mourn, when others are merry, it is better to go to the house of mourning than of feasting. *Blessed are they that mourn* (saith Christ) *but wo to them that laugh.* We are here in the valley of tears, and kingdom of patience. The Lord will wipe the tears from your eyes; he is leading you by bell to heaven, and through many tribulations and afflictions to his Kingdom; peace shall be the end of your battels, and rest the



the end of your trouble. We have, Bessie, brought you a drink of wine to comfort your spirit. Wine (said she) the worst water in the well is over good for me. I will have no wine; why should I have the benefit when it is neither blessed to me, neither can I bless him that gives it? I care not for outward bodily comforts, since I cannot get the inward and spiritual. Will ye seek it of God (Bessie) in the Name of Jesus. Lord, if thou wilt (said she) the Lord hath power enough; but not finding faith in Jesus she said, she wanted a warrant to seek it in his Name. I will show you a warrant (Bessie) his own command with a promise, Ps. 50. 15. *In the day of thy trouble, &c.* 1. John, 2. 23. *This is his commandment, that we believe, &c.* Also he calleth Matth. 11. on the weary & laden, promising to ease them; you cannot deny but you are both weary & laden under the load, therefore you are called in; and the more miserable you are, you are the meetter object for mercy to work on. Will ye fly from the Savior, because you are lost? or from the Physician, because you are sick? Alas (said she) I cannot find a warrant, I find a wrong warrant. What call you a wrong warrant, said I? I cannot find Christ (said she) and any thing beside him is wrong.

M. But say Jesus, interceed for me. I will not blaspheme him (said she) nor be a liar; I am a liar great enough already: for me to speak the words in my mouth without faith in my heart, what is that but to take his Name in vain?

M. Shal I pray for you, Bessie? What good (said she) can I get by your prayers, except I had a heart to pray my self. I have many things to seek, if I could get faith to believe, & relief to my spirit, and what matter of saws then? When I see that I saw not, then shal I do that I did not. These three years I had not a faithful desire; indeed I thought it came all from your own mouth, all the inlack of my prayers.

M. How so, Bessie? what heard you me say? That prayer availed not, said she, M. I have oft complained of our prayers,



as I had just cause, & that God might be angry against them. *Psal.* 81. 9, and might repel them, if he dealt in justice with us; but this was not to make us leave off prayer, but to repent and pray more fervently. But the time hath been when you delighted in prayer, said I. She answered, I found comfort then in prayer; I had no comfort but in prayer: I had many calamities, & whom to should I seek but to God? And oft went I to him with a grieved heart: had I God what reck of all the world? What reck who be against them, if he be with them? But if a soul be under Gods feed, what availeth friends, kin, jewels, and all the world? Oh, and alace for ever, that I should want that blessing and favor that he bestows on so many! Alace, I have gotten the poor mans answer, You will not be served.

M. Take not that answer (Bessie) continue crying and knocking; for he hath said, *Seek, and you shal find.* And to the poor woman of Canaan, that would not take a repulse, or nay-say, was satisfied in end. But I am none of his side, said she. Bessie (said I) who told you that? The devil would have you think so; & will you take his testimony against you, who is a liar from the beginning, and not the witness of the verity & Word of God with you? Believe not satan, nor your own false heart; I know God in his own time will give you comfort.

B. The knowledge is yours (said she) but the sorrow is mine. Well is the soul that getteth the holy Spirit to seek grace and mercy at his hands. Well is the soul that getteth the benefit and the blessing with it; but fie on them that count the fore afore the glory, the fore of the earth before the glory of heaven; it is no fore to them, but a fearful curse. Alace I have long to live, and a wretched life; I weary up, and I weary down, sighs help not, sobs help not, groans help not, and prayer is faint. It is a fearful calamity to have wo here, & wo hereafter; to have hell here, and hell hereafter for ever. The matter is the less they that get a light life, and a lightsom life, that



that many have, but it is most woful and doleful to have we here, and wo hereafter for ever. I will tell you my testament, I have been in hell these many years, and I look never for another heaven. O wretch that I am! alace, for ever, there is a great flie coming, a fearful cup, and I will get my share of it; and it is nothing I feel here, to that I feel for ever.

M. Bessie, the Lord corrects you here that you perish not with the world for ever. He woundeth, and he will heal again, albeit you can neither think it, nor feel it, nor hope for it; yet in his Name I will assure you, in his own time he will ease you and speak peace to you. I cannot (said she) find you a good spay-man.

M. Yet if ever, Bessie, I speak true, you will find it. I promise you in the Name of the Lord. She answered, The Lords Lievtenant will be loath to lie; well is his Lievtenant. Whom call you said I, his Lievtenant? You, said she, and such as you; Ye are tenants, and not Masters. Bessie, grip to the promise of mercy, hope above hope. I have not, said she, that gift of my self, if God give me it not. Seek it of God, said I. What reck of words, said she, since I cannot get mends to my inward parts. I am sure, said I if you should go to hell, Bessie, you would go to hell with love to God. She answered, What reck of my love to him, since he hath none to me; if he had love to me, all were well. But he loves you, Bessie, before you loved him, for your love is the effect of his; and they whom he loveth, can never perish. His own, said she, shal never perish. But ye are one of those, Bessie, and hath right to the promise. She answered, How shal I believe you who believes not him who hath all power, and is truth it self? I would fain seek God, but I feel my stops and lets, and my prayers are dung back. If any had but four and twenty hours, yea, a touch of that, under which I have lyen these three years, they would think their case fearful, and would give a world (if they had it) for a blink of his reconciled



we ciled face. But my calamity will make others run and cry for  
ent, mercy; my grief & displeasure is your joy and gladness. How  
for so ( Bessie ) we take no pleasure in your grief. She answered,  
ere A Christian that is sealed seeing me, will flee to mercy as  
of a bird ; but I want wings. After I had prayed for her, she  
said , If God would give me a heart to give you thanks for  
not your good prayers, I would give it : and if I had a motion in  
eal the right way of salvation, O as I should run and flee to him  
ope like a bird ! God be blessed said I , I see some fore-running  
he token of his coming with comfort. She answered, They are  
e ) but sober and smal tokens. Your words ( said I ) smel some-  
times of the Spirit of grace and faith , and sometimes of the  
o. flesh, infidelity and infirmity; for the prayers of the Saints are  
he oft like a fire, which at the first hath smoke and reek, with-  
nt, out light or heat ; but breaketh out ere all be done into a  
nd clear light, and comfortable heat ; as may be seen in sundry  
to of Davids Psalms , where he begins with heavy complaints , and  
aid endeth in heavenly praises and prayers ere all be done.

At another time, I asked, if any comfort was yet come ?  
d, She answered, Dolor was come, but no comfort. You are  
et troubled with me in Pulpit, and out in Pulpit, and in coming  
go unto me day after day; will you make you quite of this cum-  
he ber. Bessie ( said I ) I think no cumber of it , it is the duty of  
ne my calling, and would God you got comfort by it. But how  
u, shal I free my self of it ? She answered , Cut me off. And  
of wherefore ( said I ) would ye have me, or any, taking your  
, blood upon us, and sin on our souls. Nay , no sin, said she,  
, for there is good cause. What cause? said I. What have you  
I done deserving death? Is not unbelief, said she , the greatest  
d sin in the world, and I am guilty of it. We have said I, no  
d warrant for that : again, you are not void of faith, however  
en in your wrestling with unbelief, you think so, and you would  
d fain believe , and be freed of unbelief , that you might say  
d with the Apostle, *It is not you, but sin in you.* You are a sufferer  
B in



in this against your will, you are spiritually oppressed, and groans to God under this bondage. Then she uttereth these words, O that I could get this fountain of faith, a stream of it O as grace would grow! O for a blessed blink of the favorable face of the Father of the faithful! O to win to the holy fountain! I know he is ready to give, if I were ready to receive and seek: Glory pertaineth to him, and glorification shall be to him. I pray you, Bessie, seek on, and glorify him by the incalling of his Name: Pray him in Jesus Name, to be merciful to you, and help your unbelief, I can (said she) name Jesus; but he will not be pleased with words, except I had a warrant of faith in my heart to seek by. M. Yet will you say the words; I think there is none but you, but they will do this much for me. Many speaks them (said she) with little faith, but I dare not that I draw not down his punishments.

M. Bessie, he will never be angry that you pray him to glorify himself, in giving you an heart to believe in him. I have great lets, said she. M. But pray him to take them away. Think you (said she) that be to do while now? M. But continue and let me hear you, and be a witness to it: do this for my pleasure. It were my own pleasure and good (said she) if I could do it rightly, it were my own well: But God hath a work to work with me, that you never saw the like of it. Bessie, pray God in Jesus, that it may be a work of mercy to his glory, and your salvation. She answered, I will tell you by my mind, Jesus is a just One without exception, not like the false flesh of this generation, he will lose none of his own. And though they fall fearfully, he will raise them again; but those that he bids not of, he gives them no grace to seek him, whereof I am one. I can name him, and speak any words as you hear; my mouth should be opened to seek, if my heart were opened to believe, but it is closed: I may mourn for it, but I cannot mend it; but, Lord mend it; Lord mend it, Seek (said I) for Christs sake. I want faith (said she)

I know



I know the sin of man is not so great, but Gods mercy is greater to forgive it, where they can repent and believe. But I have not this grace of my self, if God give it not; Pray that ye may be preserved from the peril and plague that is to come on me. Well are them that are grounded on Christ, well is them that are brethren and sisters to him. O that I were one of them! O that those that are come out of my loins would seek to him, and bless him! O that the Grace-giver would give me grace to believe, & give him glory and I should bless him, and give him thanks and praise, and honor and glory for ever. Oh, that I could get an heart to give him thanks for any thing he sends. Why should not I be content with his will? O that I could welcome his send, how bitter soever, and reverence the sender! What reck of me if he get his own glory; but, alace! I have many wants, many woes, wangerace, wanchance, no weals: I am sorely shaken, a sore shake of wrath is come on my soul.

M. He shakes you (Bessie) to make you sure. If it were so (said she) I would seek to him. The tentation (said I) dings you from that you desire, and you are greatly wounded in your spiritual battle; but what reck of a wound to him that getteth the victory; you will in the Lords mercy get the victory, what reck of your wounds then; And we will sit down on our knees, & crave it to you of God, in the Name of Jesus. After I had prayed (she said) God for thy beloved Son Jesus sake, see to my-mister, succor me. Now ye are witness to that, that ye would have had that I seek in Jesus Name. Blessed be God, for it is said. Seek on, and I will pledge my soul for yours, that ye shall be safe. Seek must I (said she) and seek will I, though he should ding me back to the bottom of the sea; and charge the whole family that they do the like, as you do to me; for come well, come wo, they will get a share of it. I will (said I) for they ought to concurr with you.



The next time that I visited her, and demanded how she did? She answered, The life of the body is not like to go out, and comfort is not like to come into the soul. Yet wait, Bessie, in hope, and give not over, it will come. I know (said she) your tales and tidings, but cannot find them true: Alace, that ever I came into the world, I am not booked, I am not baptized, I am not written in the book of life, I am not baptized with the right baptism, I cannot find the fruit of it. M. Bessie (said I) I am sorry that I find you not as I left you, Continued you not calling on God in Christs Name, as you promised? She answered, I was the worse of the words that you caused me to say? I am ever since a thousand times more troubled then before. Bessie, the words have not the wite, it is satan that rageth before he be cast out: and your trouble the nearer the light, the nearer is the delivery; and although your Physick be bitter, yet it will have good effect. No trouble is joyous or pleasant for the present, &c. *Heb. 12.* The Lord who will not let the hand of the wicked ly long upon the back of the righteous, *Psal. 125. 3.* will not let his own hand, which is heavier then the hand of the wicked, ly long; he will send the issue with the tentation, *1. Cor. 10. 13.* Wherefore hearken not (Bessie) to satans suggestions, that your heart be not bound up that you pray not. That is (said she) a true tale, satan binds up my heart. But pray (said I) against it: say the Lords Prayer. I can (said she) say the words, but I have no warrand to pray it. I cannot call him Father: he is the Father of the faithful alone; but that priviledge of children is not given me; I cannot find a warrand that I am his: alace, that ever I was the cursed ground whereon the ill seed was sown. M. Bessie, the more miserable you find your self, the more meet are you to go to the Savior for mercy. I am not (said she) worthy that he should give me any grace or mercy.

M. Bessie



M. Bessie, none is worthy; and if he gave to the worthy, his glory and praise would be the less; but in this is his mercy magnified, that he manifesteth it on the miserable: and this is a fault in us, that we are ever seeking something in our selves which would derogate from the praise of his grace as presumption and desperation are dangerous rocks that many run on; and this is a third, and as dangerous as any of them and the rather, that it is not soon seen or taken up, we are ay seeking something in our selves that should commend us to God, as if we could not be saved, except we were perfect, as if our own innocency, and not Gods mercy in Christs merits, were the warrant of our salvation.

B. I cannot speak the word can please you, no not them that came out of my bowels; how then can it please the Lord; Mine own hand and satan lets me not believe, and my unbelief draweth down all the ill of the world, and you book me, and carries my name in manie airts, but I cannot commend it. M. Bessie, nothing to your prejudice carrie I your name; for why should not the Saints know of your estate? I pray you, tell me, said she, how the people think of me, whether they be blyth or wo? I will assure you, Bessie, Gods people mourns with you, and bears a part of your burden; as for my self, I have five children sick of the fever, God who knows my heart, is my witness, that I would not so fain have them raised up in their bodies, as you comforted in spirit. You know your warrant, said she.

M. I look to that; I seek mercy. But, said she, if I had spiritual grace, and could, I would give you a reward. Will ever that day dawn that God will draw me a wandering sheep home to himself? M. Bessie, in Gods mercy, I am assured of it. The God, said she, who made heaven and earth, who hath all power, grant it in mercy: Well is them for ever finds his favor, but wo to them that feels his feed: and I hope, it would mitigate my sorrow, Bessie, said I, the

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Lord



Lord who by a secret grace underprops and sustains you now, will in his own time, by a sensible grace, and by his presence, abundantly comfort your soul, in such sort, that the weight and grievousness of the temptation and trouble, and delay of time, shall be recompensed with unspeakable joy: that you your self shall confess the one light, in regard of the other, not to be worthy of it: as by the contrary, he recompenseth the delay of judgement toward the wicked, with the heavier weight of wrath. Happie, said she, are they who suffer for Christs sake, for righteousness sake, they will be comforted now and then; but they that suffer for sin, without sense of his favor, comfortless is their condition. Will you go through the earth, up and down, to and fro, where will they find a wearied wight till they come to me? And you that hear me, with the pith of prayer that I can, I ask of God that you never know the way that I am in: it is lack of faith that is my loss; want of faith is my wrack. I lie under fearful weights, and wanteth faith to get the remission of them, am fallen without a resurrection. My Judge is my partie, have no claim to his mercie. I have no ground of faith to fasten grips on him. I find not a spark of light, and I find no fruit of your prayers, albeit I hear them. No Christian should come near me.

M. Bessie, the Lord will oft, for good causes, desert his dearest Saints, and withdraw himself from their sight and sense of their humiliation and instruction (that they cannot grace natural) for their greater consolation when he cometh again, and for your provocation: follow after him when he withdraweth his grace, and yet it is not a real, but a supposed desertion: wherefore seek his sensible presence and break through all impediments of terrors, blindness and unbelief, or what else, thrimble through all, and he shall come leaping over the mountains of your sins, and hills of wrath, with the voice of heavenlie consolation.

B. S.



B. Shal I seek hot water under cold yce ; I have not come in the precise and blessed hour of grace. I am come behind ; and where you will me to pray , wherefore serves the prayer that glorifieth not God ?

M. Bessie , it is yet the acceptable time ; and he who is found of them that seek him not , will much more reveal himself to him that seeketh. And as for prayer , by it you greatlie glorifie God ; for you acknowledge your miserie and necessitie , and that he is God ; who not onlie knows your miserie and necessitie but is both willing and able to help the same : and we have not onlie his command to pray , but also his promise to be heard.

B. Then all break his commands , and chiefly I , and so will be seen on the whole swack.

After this when I had read some comfortable places to her , and prayed for her , she cryed out , and doubled it oft , O blessed are they that have that spirit of prayer ! O blessed are they.

**N**OW as for the end of this Conflict , and death of this dear daughter of Abraham , in April 1625. I being at Glasgow at the Provincial Assemblie , the Lord called her home , she being greatlie extenuat and worn , what by hea- vie sickness on her bodie , what by this longsome and fear- ful exercise on her soul , death on a suddentie dealt with her heart , that her words and speech failed her : but in presence of diverse witnesses , her hands and eyes were heaved to the heavens , and so giving that sign of victorie , she rendered her spirit. And although it pleased our gracious God ( who in his great wisdom worketh after diverse sorts with his own ) to let us hear out of her own mouth of the glorious victorie , and unspeakable joyes that he had given her inwardlie in her soul ; yet I am sure there is none that is illuminat from above , and taught to discern spirituallie , that will any way doubt



doubt of her blessed delivrance, albeit no outward sign had been seen. Yea, it was a wonderful mercie, that God, so long under such horrors, held her own hand out of her self; which at last with her eyes she lifted up to the heavens, when her speech could not express her inward feeling of an unspeakable joy, and victorious faith.

Onlie herein we have our warning to be wise in time, and to get oyl in our lamps, and not to please our selves with emptie lamps, and with a bare show of an outward profession; but labor to have a livelie and effectual faith in the depth of our souls: for conceit of opinion will seem sufficient, till we be put at, which will not do our turn, nor stand us in stead in the sierre tryal.

F I N I S.





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